Lines Worksheet for analysis and design of this live production

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

This play is comprised of many interviews with residents of Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is set in the present, and covers current issues of race in the area.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

Since the play doesn't follow a single story arc, there isn't a clear intrusion. I would say discrimination in the town would the thing that disrupts life and propels the action of this play to the conclusion.

3. What is the *unique factor*?

“Today is the day that…” these residents are interviewed and the actors play out their narratives.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

Can these *lines* that have been created and accepted by society be broken down?

5. Identify some of the most *theatrical moments* in the play and of what importance they were to you.

Esther’s emotional speech around minute 20 struck me as a very theatrical moment. She is talking about these expensive stores that have moved into the area that don't employ local people and have prices that most locals can’t afford.

The introduction to the section on schools is also a theatrical moments because it involves all the cast onstage at once singing and moving in unison.

The speech made by the “politician and business owner” about moving up in this country is also very theatrical - the actor uses an exaggerated voice and extreme facial expressions to make an impression on the audience.

Also, the entire section at the end with the flashlights is very emotional. Here, we see cases of police discrimination and court injustices.

6. List some of the *themes* of the play.

* Judging intelligence based on an American standard of knowing English and knowing American customs
* The problems which arise when businesses don't match the needs of the people in an area
* Discrimination based on where you live
* Police discrimination and brutality against African Americans
* The issue of religious unity and tolerance

7. Describe some possible *images* in the play and how does the *title* help us understand the play.

Those boxes… I was thinking they might represent holes in peoples’ hearts and lives where individuals they care about have left and others have taken their place.

Everyone is barefoot in the play, perhaps representing a common connection with all humanity or a connection to nature.

The building cut outs in the back tie the play back very closely to Grand Rapids and a busy city.

The title, *Lines, the Lived Experience of Race*, plainly lays out the idea behind the play from the very first time an audience member reads an advertisement or program. By saying “the Lived Experience,” this makes the play very personal, indicating that everyone can relate to issues addressed in the play.

8. The production used the stage in a multitude of creative ways to places where the action took place. List some of these that particularly stood out to you.

The fact that the floor had removable boxes was extremely unique! Normally, productions might have acting blocks on stage, but rarely do they ever fit into the floor. The building cutouts also have the stage texture and set it specifically in Grand Rapids. And by painting the floor white, the actor’s dark clothing stood out well and they could light the floor for dramatic sequences.

9. Projections and lighting also played an important role in the performance. Discuss the use of both to achieve the intended effect.

The projections were very helpful to me as I tried to keep track of the different characters. Both the screen at the top with peoples’ names and occupations, and the side screens which showed buildings and areas of Grand Rapids. The lighting was executed very well! Often, there would be a sudden blackout at the end of a scene right after someone had said a very impactful line. Also, the red lighting at the end with the flashlights helped to create a tense and uncomfortable atmosphere on stage as well as in the audience.

10. Live and recorded sound played a role in this production. What were some of the memorable uses of these to support the stories that were told.

Well, I found the drums rather distracting! I thought they drowned out a lot of the important lines of the play. The group chanting was very well done - it bound the cast together and created a powerful image of unity for the audience. The drums, from the very beginning of the play, do keep the pace moving with in the play. They create some tension like a fast heart beat and build as the action builds.